

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

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INFO USCINCEUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0006

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN REACTION TO U.S. POLICY TOWARDS ETHIOPIA

1. SUMMARY: ERITREANS ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION MORE OPENLY THE APPARENTLY NEUTRAL POLICY OF THE U.S. TOWARDS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA. THEY FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE APPARENT SUPPORT OF OR LACK OF VOCAL DISAPPROVAL OF THE PMG IN LIGHT OF THE 23 NOV MASSACRE, ANNOUNCEMENT OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM, AND ARMY REPRISALS AGAINST ASMARA POPULACE DURING WEEK OF 22 DEC 74. ERITREANS IN INCREASINGLY NUMBERS ARE DETERMINED TO END AMHARA OPPRESSION AND ARE SEARCHING FOR A HELPING HAND FROM A WORLD POWERS. END SUMMARY.

2. I AM CONSTANTLY CONFRONTED WITH RUMORS INVOLVING US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. I HAVE GIVEN THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS:

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE US WARSHIPS IN MASSAWA, ARE THEY FOR EVACUATING AMERICANS OR SUPPORTING ERITREA AGAINST ETHIOPIA?

A. US NAVAL VESSELS BASED IN BAHRAIN HAVE MADE PORT CALLS IN MASSAWA AS WELL AS OTHER PORTS IN THE RED SEA, PERSIAN GULF, AND INDIAN OCEAN FOR THE PAST YEAR. THE VISITS SERVE THE PURPOSE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SHIP RESUPPLY AND REPAIR AND SHORE LEAVE FOR THE SAILORS. THE

VISITS OF THE USS MONTGOMERY AND USNS MARIAS ARE PART OF THIS SCHEDULE.

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVT REFUSED BERTING TO US SHIPS?

A. I UNDERSTAND THERE WERE MORE SHIPS THAN BERTHS IN MASSAWA CHRISTMAS WEEK, SO IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BOTH US VESSELS DID NOT HAVE BERTHS.

Q. IS IT TRUE THE USG IS THROWING THE ETHIOPIAN ARMY OFF OF KAGNEW STATION (TRACE E)?

A. TRACE E IS STILL USG PROPERTY SINCE THERE HAS NOT BEEN A FORMAL TRANSFER TO THE PMG. EVEN THOUGH THE PROPERTY WAS OCCUPIED BY THE 2ND DIV, THE USG IF MAKING NO EFFORT TO EVICT THEM. WE JUST WANT TO COMPLETE THE FORMAL TRANSFER.

SGT. HORNE, MAAG ADVISOR, HAS BEEN ASKED WHY HE GIVES WEAPONS TO ETHIOPIA TO KILL ERITREANS. HE EXPLAINS THAT HE IS AN AUTO-MOTIVE/TRANSPORTATION ADVISOR AND THAT WEAPONS GIVEN ARE FOR DEFENSE AGAINST FOREIGN AGGRESSION AND NOT TO KILL ERITREANS. OTHER AMERICANS HAVE BEEN ASKED WHY USG DOES NOT HELP ERITREA.

3. CONGEN RECEIVED LETTER DATED 26 DEC, BY MAIL, ON 2 JAN. THE LETTER BEGAN BY ASKING WHY THE USG HAD FORGOTTEN ITS FRIENDS IN ERITREA. IT WENT ON TO REJECT EHTIOPIAN OPPRESSION AND TO SAY THAT ERITREA WOULD GET IS INDEPENDENCE. THE LETTER WAS SIGNED QUOTE THE ELF UNQUOTE, BUT CARRIED NO SEAL. LETTER WILL BE POUCHEO TO EMBASSY AND DEPT.

3. COMMENT: THE ABOVE INFO IS REPORTED TO GIVE A SENSE OF THE MOOD IN ASMARA. OUR POLICY OF VIEWING THE ERITREAN PROBLEM AS AN INTERNAL MATTER HAS BEEN ADEQUATE IN THE PAST. HOWEVER IN THE PRESENT FLUID SITUATION THIS POLICY MAY DESERVE REVIEW. IF THE ERITREAN PROBLEM IS TAKEN TO AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM BY ERITREANS, USG SILENCE MAY BE MISCONSTRUED BY ERITREANS.
THE PRESENCE AND HISTORY OF KAGNEW STATION HAS CREATED ERITREANS EXPECTATIONS THAT PROBABLY CAN NOT BE FULL-FILLED BY THE USG. SOME HARD DECISIONS WILL NEED TO BE MADE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEAR FUTURE BY THE USG, IN REGARD TO WHERE OUR REAL INTERESTS LIE IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA.

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